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The conſtraining Influence of the Love of Chriſt:

A SERMON,

PREACHED,

In the Church of the United Pariſhes of

St. Mary Woolnoth and St. Mary Woolchurch-Haw, Lombard-Street,

BEFORE THE RIGHT HONOURABLE

THE LORD-MAYOR, ALDERMEN, AND SHERIFFS,

On the 30th Day of March, 1800,

By JOHN NEWTON, Rector,

FOR THE

Benefit of the Children

BELONGING TO

LANGBOURN-WARD CHARITY-SCHOOL;

AND PUBLISHED,

BY HIS LORDSHIP's PERMISSION,

AT THE REQUEST OF THE TREASURER, TRUSTEES, AND COMMITTEE, OF THE SAID SCHOOL.

Let your Light ſo ſhine before Men, that they may ſee your good Works, and glorify your Father which is in Heaven. Matt. v. 16.

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And Mr. BATT, *Clerk to the above Pariſhes*, Sherborn-Lane.

[Price One Shilling.]

BRITISH MUSEUM

To the TREASURER, *the* TRUSTEES, *and* COMMITTEE,

OF THE

CHARITY-SCHOOL

OF

LANGBOURN-WARD,

THIS SERMON,

PUBLISHED AT THEIR REQUEST,

IS RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED AND PRESENTED

BY THEIR OBEDIENT SERVANT,

JOHN NEWTON.

ADVERTISEMENT.

THE preacher cannot publiſh this Sermon as an exact copy of what he delivered from the pulpit. Some interval paſſed before he was deſired to print it. His recollection is much impaired by age; and he had no notes to aſſiſt it: but the plan is the ſame. He hopes and believes that none of the leading ſentiments are omitted, and that the additions, if any, are but few. As it is, he commends the peruſal to the candour of the reader and the bleſſing of Almighty God.

BRITISH MUSEUM

A

SERMON.

2 CORINTHIANS, v. 13, 14, 15.

For, whether we be beſide ourſelves, it is to God: or whether we be ſober, it is for your cauſe. For, the love of Chriſt conſtraineth us, becauſe we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead: and that he died for all, that they which live ſhould not henceforth live unto themſelves, but unto him which died for them and roſe again.

THE apoſtles, and firſt preachers of the Goſpel among the heathens, exhibited to them a phenomenon perfectly new. The Greeks and Romans had known perſons, among themſelves, who had ſtrenuouſly exerted their talents and activity in the purſuit of fame, power, or wealth; but they now ſaw men no leſs indefatigable and perſevering in proſecuting a deſign which, far from procuring them either honour or profit, expoſed them, wherever they

went, to contempt, ſtripes, impriſonment, and death. Their profeſſed aim was to make others as happy as themſelves in the poſſeſſion of an unſeen Good. For the attainment of this end, they willingly gave up all proſpect of worldly advantage, though they were generally treated with ſcorn and cruelty by the moſt of thoſe whoſe beſt intereſts they wiſhed to ſerve. This was a diſintereſted benevolence of which the philoſophers, the pretended friends of wiſdom and virtue, had no idea; nor were the means they employed better underſtood. They preached Jeſus Chriſt, and him crucified!* For, endeavouring to perſuade their hearers to place their whole hope and dependence upon one whom they had never ſeen, but who had been publicly executed as a malefactor; and to affirm that this Jeſus, who died upon the croſs, was yet alive;† that He, who could not ſave himſelf from an ignominious death, was the author of eternal ſalvation to thoſe who believed on him; for theſe ſtrange aſſertions, they were pitied or deſpiſed, as viſionaries, by thoſe who did not revile them as hypocrites. Thus Feſtus, who ſeemed to have a favourable opinion of St. Paul's integrity, when he heard him relate the manner of his converſion, thought that no man, in his ſober ſenſes, could talk ſo; and therefore he ſaid, with a loud voice, Paul, thou art beſide thyſelf.‡

But his Lord and Maſter was treated thus before him, and upon ſimilar grounds. His zeal for the honour of his Heavenly Father, and his compaſſion for the

* 1 Cor. ii. 2. † Mark, xv. 31. ‡ Acts, xxvi. 24.

the ſouls of men, carried him ſo far, that we read, his friends, that is, his relations according to the fleſh, and who really wiſhed him well, ſought to lay hold of him, and reſtrain him; for, they ſaid, he is beſide himſelf.*

The Apoſtle Paul was not mad; he ſpoke the words of truth and ſoberneſs; he knew whom he had believed; he knew the worth of immortal ſouls, and the importance of eternity. He had once fiercely oppoſed the Goſpel, breathed out threatenings† and ſlaughter againſt the diſciples, and, not content with the miſchief he had done in Jeruſalem, was haſtening to Damaſcus to vex and wrong the believers there; but he was arreſted in his journey by a light and a voice from heaven; he found himſelf in the power of that Jeſus whom he had perſecuted, and who is pleaſed to conſider all that is done, either for or againſt his people, as done to himſelf. The furious Paul, of Tarſus, was humbled, pardoned, and, in a few days, commiſſioned to preach that faith which he had ſo pertinaciouſly laboured to deſtroy. From that hour renouncing all connection with his former friends, the chief prieſts and council, and all expectations from them, renouncing likewiſe that righteouſneſs of the law in which he before had boaſted, he devoted himſelf to the ſervice of his Lord and Saviour and of the cauſe which he had oppoſed. His ardour was aſtoniſhing and exemplary. Unwearied by labour, undiſmayed by danger, unaffected by hardſhip

* Mark, iii. 21. † Acts, ix.

and ſuffering, but ſupported and cheered by the preſence of Him whom he ſerved, he preached the Goſpel in ſeaſon and out of ſeaſon, publicly and from houſe to houſe, in Judea, in Aſia, in Greece, in Italy, and many other parts of the Roman empire. For this zeal in ſeeking to promote the good of others, of ſtrangers, of enemies, at the expenſe of all that was dear to himſelf as a man, he found, as he expected, in almoſt every place which he viſited, open oppoſitions, and ſecret conſpiracies againſt his life: he was ſcourged by the Jews, beaten with rods by the Romans, and confined in priſons and chains; he was likewiſe the marked object of general contempt; the wiſe men of the times deſpiſed him as a babbler; he was deemed by many the filth of the world, and the offſcouring of all things; many ſaid, Away with ſuch a fellow from the earth,* it is not fit that he ſhould live! But when, in defiance of all diſcouragements, he ſtill preſſed forward, as if he had done nothing, while any thing more remained to be done, accounted the diſgrace he met with his honour, and gloried in his chains,† we cannot wonder, if the more moderate of his obſervers, who knew not his principles, thought that he was ſurely beſide himſelf.

The only apology he ſaw fit to make is expreſſed in my text. The bulk of mankind in Chriſtendom, by whatever name they are diſtinguiſhed, pay little more regard to the Goſpel than the Jews or heathens did

* Acts, xxii. 22. † Acts, xxviii. 20.

did in the apoſtle's days. The heart of man, in its natural ſtate, is the ſame in all ages, devoid of either taſte or inclination for the things of God, till viſited by power from on high. Faithful miniſters are ſtill liable to be thought beſide themſelves, by ſome, for the ſubject-matter of their diſcourſes; by others, for the importunity and freedom of their addreſſes to the conſciences of their hearers. We are, however, encouraged by St. Paul's example, and we adopt his apology: If we are beſide ourſelves, it is to God.— We ſpeak in his name, and the meſſage we deliver, ſo far as agreeable to the Scripture, is from Him, and to Him we are reſponſible. If we are ſober, if we expoſtulate and reaſon with you in familiar language upon the uncertainty of life, the certainty of death, and a future judgement, and other truths, which none but infidels will venture to deny, it is for your ſakes.

The word Enthuſiaſm is often uſed, by the ſame perſon, in two very different ſenſes. It is a term of commendation when applied to orators, poets, painters, or ſculptors, and expreſſes the energy of genius. No one is expected to excel in the fine arts without a portion of enthuſiaſm, and it is ſuppoſed eſſential to military proweſs. But it has quite another acceptation in religious concerns. If a miniſter of the Goſpel is warm and earneſt, he is frequently ſtigmatized as an enthuſiaſt, that is, as the impoſers of the name would have it underſtood, a perſon of a weak mind and diſordered judgement, if he be really ſincere;

for,

for, many are willing to ſuppoſe that his enthuſiaſm is no more than a maſk or veil, aſſumed to cover the artful views of a deſigning hypocrite.

For myſelf, it is a ſmall thing for me to be judged by man's judgement.* At my time of life, nearly the cloſe of my ſeventy-fifth year, it behoves me to think it very poſſible, yea, not improbable, that every time I appear in the pulpit may be my laſt; and, when I look round upon this reſpectable congregation, I doubtleſs ſee ſome perſons before me who will never hear me again. Perhaps we ſhall meet no more in this world; but we ſhall certainly meet before the tribunal of the Great Judge, to whom all hearts are open, all deſires known, and from whom no ſecrets are hidden. Then *I* muſt give an account of my miniſtry, and *you* muſt give an account of yourſelves to God. Surely, if I believe what the Scripture teaches of the evil of ſin, the glory of the Saviour, the worth of the ſoul, and the importance of eternity, you will allow me to ſpeak with the ſame degree of emotion. As this may be my laſt opportunity, if there were but one perſon amongſt us, who has not yet attended duly to theſe great ſubjects, I muſt not let him depart as he came; I muſt warn him by the terrors of the Lord;† I muſt beſeech him by his tender mercies; I am deſirous to ſave both my own ſoul and the ſouls of thoſe that hear me.‡ Whether I be beſide myſelf, or ſober, it is for the cauſe of God and for your ſakes. The love of Chriſt conſtraineth me.

We

* 1 Cor. iv. 4. † 2 Cor. v. 11. Rom. xii. 1. ‡ 1 Tim. iv. 16.

We may obſerve from this paſſage,

1ſt, The grand leading motive of the apoſtle's conduct, *The love of Chriſt conſtrains us.*

2dly, Two doctrines which virtually comprehend the whole ſubjects of the Goſpel-Miniſtry. 1. The proviſion which the mercy of God made for the recovery of fallen man, *One died for all*; whence he infers, 2. *Then were all dead.*

3dly, The end he had in view, and which he hoped and expected to obtain, by inſiſting on theſe truths wherever he went. That they which live ſhould not henceforth live to themſelves, but to Him who died for them and roſe again.

I. The love of Chriſt was the apoſtle's chief motive; it conſtrained him, συνεχει; bore him along like a torrent, in defiance of labour, hardſhip, and oppoſition. Many of us know the force of love in ſocial life, and feel a readineſs to do, bear, or forbear, much for thoſe whom we greatly love. But there is no love to be compared with the love of Chriſt. He is the brightneſs of the Father's glory,* the expreſs image of his perſon, God manifeſt in the fleſh; all things were created by him and for him; for, this high and lofty One, who inhabiteth eternity,† in the fulneſs of time, aſſumed our nature into perſonal union with himſelf, was born of a woman, made under the law, to redeem thoſe that were under the law, that ſinners, believing in his name, might not only eſcape deſerved condemnation, but might receive the adoption

* Heb. i. 3. 1 Tim. iii. 16. † Iſaiah, lvii. 15.

adoption of ſons.* For this great purpoſe, he emptied himſelf; and, though in the form of God, he appeared upon earth in the form of a ſervant, ſubmitted to a ſtate of poverty, reproach, and oppoſition, was deſpiſed and rejected of men, lived a ſuffering life, and terminated his ſufferings by a cruel and ignominious death; for, he became obedient unto death, even the death of the croſs.† Therefore God highly exalted his human nature, and has given him a name above every name. The Lamb, once upon the croſs, is now the Lamb upon the throne, poſſeſſing and exerciſing all power in heaven and on earth. Yet he is ſtill mindful of thoſe for whom he ſuffered; his heart is made of tenderneſs; his bowels melt with love; he appears in the preſence of God, for them,‡ as their great high prieſt, advocate, and interceſſor. By his holy word, he invites, and by the power of his Holy Spirit he draws, and encourages, and enables, the weary and heavy-laden to come unto him for reſt. He declares, that they, who apply to him, he will *in no wiſe* caſt out;§ and he promiſes to ſave them *to the uttermoſt*; to ſupport and guide them ſafely through all their conflicts, temptations, and trials, while they are here; to lead them ſafely through the dark valley of the ſhadow of death; and then to receive them to himſelf, that they may be ever with him to behold his glory.‖

Such

* Gal. iv. 4, 5. † Phil. ii. 8. ‡ Heb. ix. 24.
§ John, v. 37. Heb. vii. 25. ‖ John, xvii. 24.

Such is the love of Chriſt; — or rather we may be aſhamed of the faintneſs of our conceptions of this love. When we attempt to conſider the glory of his divine perſon, the depth of his humiliation, the unknown ſorrows and agonies which wrung his heart in Gethſemane and on Mount Golgotha, and that he endured all this for his enemies, even for thoſe whoſe hearts were, both by nature and habit, alienated from him, the power he exerts in reconciling them to himſelf, the bleſſings he beſtows upon them in this life, when they are renewed by his grace, and the eternal happineſs he has prepared for them in a future ſtate, — I ſay, when we attempt to conceive of this love, in its origin, progreſs, and effects, we are ſoon overwhelmed, our thoughts are ſwallowed up, and we can only wonder and adore in ſilence. This love of Chriſt to ſinners is inexpreſſible, unſearchable, and paſſing knowledge; it is an ocean without either bottom or ſhore.

They who have obtained mercy, who do know him, love and truſt in him, have likewiſe their peculiar and appropriate reaſons for admiring his love. They often reflect on what they were doing, and whither they were going, when he firſt touched their hearts, and made them willing to receive him as their prophet, prieſt, and king. They are ſenſible that, if they had died in their ignorance, they muſt have been loſt for ever; and, while they ſee many of their fellow-creatures, no worſe by nature than themſelves, who live in the world, without God, without Chriſt,

and

and die, it is to be feared, without any ſolid ground of hope, they rejoice, with trembling, for that undeſerved and unſought mercy, which preſerved them from going down into the pit of deſtruction, when their ſins were unpardoned and their hearts unhumbled. They confeſs that they were barren trees in God's vineyard; and, though he had a right to expect fruit from them, and waited year after year, he found none. Why then were they not cut down as cumberers of the ground? It was owing to the gracious interpoſition of the Great Mediator whom they had long diſregarded. Thus, as we have obſerved, it was with our apoſtle. The pride of his heart, and the prejudices of his education, had fired him with rage againſt the cauſe and the people of the Lord. He ſeems to have been no leſs active and furious in oppoſing them than Herod. But Herod was ſuddenly cut off, and devoured by worms; whereas Paul, of Tarſus, who had done much miſchief, while meditating more, was ſuddenly convinced, humbled, and pardoned. We cannot wonder that the love of Chriſt was the conſtraining motive of his conduct from that time to the end of his life.

Oh, that we all knew the need and the worth of this Saviour! Then we ſhould all love him! This will be the deciding point at laſt. St. Paul, writing by inſpiration of God, ſays, in one place, Grace be with all them that love the Lord Jeſus Chriſt in ſincerity.* In another place, under the ſame influence, he

* Epheſ. vi. 24. 1 Cor. xvi. 22.

he denounces an awful ſentence againſt thoſe who love him not. If any man love not the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, let him be anathema. This was by no means the apoſtle's wiſh; he would willingly have been made an anathema himſelf, after the manner of Chriſt,* if he could thereby procure the ſalvation of his enemies who ſought his life in every place. But he declared the will of God, that if any man, who hears, or might hear, the record that God has given of his Son, refuſes to love and ſerve him, and lives and dies a ſtranger to his love, he muſt, he will, be accurſed! for,

II. He is the One, the mighty One, who died for all. The ſacrifices, which were types of his appearance in the fulneſs of time to put away ſin, by the ſacrifice of himſelf, were appropriated for the inſtruction and conſolation of the people of Iſrael. But now the partition-wall is broken down. The diſtinction between Jew and Gentile is removed. Jeſus died, that all, of every age and nation, whether high or low, rich or poor, bond or free, who, to the ends of the earth, and to the end of time, ſhould believe in his name, might live through him. As the ſun, his great viſible emblem, fills every eye with his light, and would do ſo, were they as numerous as the leaves upon the trees or the blades of graſs in the fields, without the leaſt diminution of his effulgence; ſo this Lord God, our Saviour, the ſun of the intellectual world, is the ſame, yeſterday, to-day, and for ever.

Wherever

* Rom. ix. 3.

Wherever the word of his Goſpel is known, he makes it his power, to the ſalvation of all who believe on him. The value and efficacy of his atonement and righteouſneſs are inexhauſtible. It is true the blind are in darkneſs at noon-day; but this Sun of Righteouſneſs not only affords light to thoſe who can ſee, but gives ſight to the blind. He invites all to come to him for relief; but many refuſe to apply. They prefer darkneſs to light, becauſe their deeds are evil. But all who ſeek him, and wait for him, in the ways of his appointment, are graciouſly accepted; they receive their ſight; they look to him, and are ſaved. He has declared, he that cometh I will in no wiſe caſt out, whatever their former characters or conduct may have been; but they who, though repeatedly wooed and warned, will not come, if they perſiſt in their obſtinacy, muſt periſh in unbelief; for, he is ſovereign in the diſpenſation of his grace.

If One, if *this* One, the only-beloved Son of God, died thus for all; if the Lord of Glory humbled himſelf to aſſume our nature, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the croſs; it ſurely muſt be for ſome very important deſign, worthy of himſelf, and which he alone was able to accompliſh. The apoſtle briefly ſtates the neceſſity and urgency of the caſe, by way of inference: If one died for all, then were all dead. The Scripture abundantly declares the ſtate of fallen man, of all mankind, to be a ſtate of death. We are all, by nature, dead in a two-fold ſenſe: dead in *law* and dead in *ſin*.

When

When a criminal has been tried, convicted, and condemned to death, in a court of juſtice, we ſpeak of him as a dead man, though the ſentence be not yet executed, and the king has the prerogative of pardoning him, if he is pleaſed to exerciſe mercy. We indeed compare great things with ſmall, when we attempt to illuſtrate the proceedings of God with men, by the uſages which obtain among ourſelves; yet, in ſome reſpects, they are often appoſite, and the Scripture teaches us by them.

As we are rational creatures, capable of knowing our Maker, and our dependance upon him for life, and breath, and all things; we are bound to love God with all our hearts, to devote our ſtrength, power, and faculties, to his ſervice, to obey his commands, to avoid whatever is contrary to his known will, to believe his promiſes, and to ſeek our happineſs in his favour. This is the law of our nature, it is indeed the law of all created intelligences, whether angels or men. When God created man upright, in his own image, this obedience and ſubmiſſion, and a diſpoſition to ſeek his ſupreme delight in his Maker, were as natural to him as it is for a fiſh to ſwim or a bird to fly. But this law we have broken. We are now depraved, and fallen from our original righteouſneſs. We are now in a ſtate of rebellion againſt God. We renounce his authority, violate his commands, are governed by our own will, and ſeek our own pleaſure and glory, diſtinct from, and in oppoſition to, the will and glory of our Creator! The law which we have

broken is holy, juſt, and good;* and, therefore, the ſentence of condemnation denounced againſt the tranſgreſſors is righteous. We come into the world devoid of all real goodneſs, and with a propenſity to every evil. The carnal mind is enmity againſt God. The heart of man, of all mankind† univerſally, is deceitful and deſperately wicked; the thoughts of men, when compared with the Holy Law, are evil, only evil, and that continually. Thus we are in a ſtate of condemnation. By nature, children of wrath. But we, through the mercy and long-ſuffering of God, are favoured with a reſpite. The juſt ſentence is not yet executed; and the Goſpel points out a way of eſcape and deliverance. For this purpoſe God ſent forth his Son, that whoſoever believeth in him might be ſaved; but he that believeth not is condemned already.‡

We are likewiſe dead in ſin. We partake with the brute-creation in the animal life, but are highly diſtinguiſhed from them by the rational life. There is likewiſe a ſpiritual life, of which our firſt parent was originally poſſeſſed, but he ſoon loſt it. In this ſenſe, when he ſinned againſt God, he died inſtantly. What the poet aſcribes to Beelzebub is true of man; he ſtill retains ſome marks of his priſtine greatneſs; he is majeſtic, though in ruins; he is alive as to the concerns of this world, and his attempts and ſucceſs give indications of his native dignity: the ſciences and

* Rom. vii. 12. † Rom. viii. 7. Jer. xvii. 9. Gen. vi. 5.
‡ John, iii. 18.

and the fine arts exhibit proofs of his genius and ability: he undertakes to meaſure the earth, to weigh the air, and almoſt to number and marſhal the ſtars. What diſcoveries have been made in geometry, natural hiſtory, and chemiſtry! What powers are diſplayed in architecture, ſculpture, painting, poetry, and muſic! But, with reſpect to the concerns of his immortal ſoul, and the great realities of the unſeen world, man, by nature, is dead as a ſtone. The dead body of Lazarus was not more incapable of performing the functions of common life, than we, by nature, are of performing one ſpiritual act, or even of feeling one ſpiritual deſire; till He, who, by his commanding word, raiſed Lazarus from the grave,* is pleaſed, by the power of his Holy Spirit, to raiſe us from the death of ſin unto a new life of righteouſneſs. He, whom we profeſs to believe will one day come to be our Judge, has aſſured us, that, except a man be born again,† he cannot even ſee the kingdom of God. He has no faculty ſuited to the perception of what belongs either to the kingdom of grace upon earth, or what is revealed of the kingdom of glory in heaven. The reſult of his cloſeſt reaſonings and ſhrewdeſt conjectures upon theſe ſubjects leave him in utter ignorance and darkneſs. As no deſcription can communicate an idea of ſun-ſhine or the colours of a rainbow to a man born blind, ſo the natural man cannot diſcern the things of God, for, they can only be ſpiritually diſcerned.‡

* John, xi. † John, iii. 3. ‡ 1 Cor. ii. 14.

But Jeſus died and roſe again. As our ſurety, he ſuſtained the curſe of the law to deliver us from condemnation; and, when he aſcended on high to appear in the preſence of God for us, he received gifts for rebellious man, eminently the gift of the Holy Spirit, that the Lord God might again dwell among them.* Thus the promiſe the Lord made by the Prophet Ezekiel is fulfilled, I will put my Spirit into you;† and then they, who before were dead, begin to live.

A load of guilt and depravity lives unfelt upon the dead ſinner; but, when he receives the principle of a new life, he groans, being burdened. The eyes of his underſtanding are opened. New, and, till then, unthought of, objects preſs upon his notice. The views he now has of God, of himſelf, and of eternity, would overwhelm him, if he was not warranted and enabled to look to Jeſus‡ as an all-ſufficient and gracious Saviour. From that hour he lives indeed! his ſins are pardoned, his fears diſpelled, his heart beats with love and gratitude. Old things are paſſed away, and all things are become new. He now lives no more to himſelf, but to Him who died for him and roſe again.

III. This was what the apoſtle aimed at, and expected, as the reſult and reward of his labours, that the love of Him who died for all might conſtrain thoſe, who live, to live no more to themſelves, but to Him.

When

* Pſ. lxviii. 18. † Ezek. xxxvi. 27. ‡ Iſa. xlv. 22.

When the ſinner, who was too long governed by the mean and narrow principle of ſelf, is enabled to believe in Jeſus for ſalvation, he feels the force of the apoſtle's words, Ye are bought with a price, ye are no longer your own,* therefore glorify God with your body and your ſpirit, which are his. This thought expands his mind and elevates his aims. So far as his faith is in exerciſe, he is conſtrained by love, inſpired by gratitude, and animated by confidence and hope, to live no more to himſelf, but to Him who loved him, and gave himſelf for him. He is now the devoted ſervant of his Lord, is governed by his precepts and example, and employs his time, talents, and influence, to promote the welfare of his fellow-creatures for the Lord's ſake.

His new principles have this effect upon him in whatever ſituation the providence of God places him. If he be poor, they teach him contentment, frugality, and induſtry; if rich, he is moderate, condeſcending, and bountiful, and ready for every good work, either to promote the knowledge of the Goſpel or to relieve the neceſſitous. The golden, plain, and comprehenſive rule, of doing to others, as he could reaſonably wiſh others, in ſimilar caſes, would do unto him, is inwrought into the very temper and habit of his mind. In a word, the true Chriſtian, whether in public or in private life, whether a huſband or a wife, a parent or a child, a maſter or a ſervant, whether poſſeſſed of rank and wealth, or ap-

* 1 Cor. vi. 19, 20.

pointed by the providence of God to ſweep the ſtreet for his ſubſiſtence, in all ſtations and circumſtances, is ambitious to let his light ſhine before men, for the honour of God, and to be filled with thoſe fruits of righteouſneſs which are by Jeſus Chriſt to his praiſe and glory.

Should theſe effects of the conſtraining love of Chriſt be diſputed by perſons of any candour, we could, degenerate as the preſent times are, refer them to living inſtances. We can point out to them perſons, who once were a burden to themſelves, a terror to their families, a nuiſance in their connections, who, by receiving the truths of the Goſpel, under the teaching of the Holy Spirit, and by feeling the conſtraining love of Chriſt, are, in all theſe reſpects, become new creatures. And I little doubt that there are thoſe now before me, to whom I may ſay, Such were ſome of you, but ye are waſhed, but ye are ſanctified, but ye are juſtified, in the name of our Lord Jeſus, and by the Spirit of our God.*

What ſhall we then ſay of the attempts of modern philoſophers, ſo called, who, if they could prevail by ſpreading the gloomy ſophiſms of infidelity, would deprive mankind of that light and comfort of which the Holy Scripture, given by inſpiration of God, is the only ſource. But, as the raging waves of the ſea, in a ſtorm, make no impreſſion upon the rock againſt which they ſucceſſively daſh themſelves into foam, and die away at its foot, ſo their moſt ſubtle, laboured,

* 1 Cor. vi. 11.

laboured, and malignant efforts to ſuppreſs the glorious Goſpel of the bleſſed God,* will only iſſue in their own confuſion. *Magna eſt veritas, et prevalebit.* Truth will triumph over all oppoſition. The Church of God, compoſed of all the living members of that body, of which the Lord Jeſus Chriſt is the living head, is founded upon a rock, againſt which the gates of hell ſhall never prevail. There will always be a people, who, animated by a ſenſe of the conſtraining love of Chriſt, will bear teſtimony to the power of his grace, and give evidence by the general tenour of their conduct in life, their patience and peace in affliction, their love to their fellow-creatures, and their joyful hopes of immortality, when fleſh and heart are fainting, that they have neither followed cunningly-deviſed fables, nor amuſed themſelves with empty notions of truth.

It is upon this ground that I am encouraged to ſolicit your liberal aſſiſtance to the School of Langbourn-Ward. I ſeldom ſay much upon theſe occaſions, having had repeated proofs of the generoſity of my ſtated auditory, and no reaſon to doubt the good-will and concurrence of the reſt of my hearers. Let the ſight of the children before you plead in their behalf. The inſtitution I am now to recommend will, I hope, preſerve theſe children, and many more in ſucceſſion, from thoſe habits of idleneſs, intemperance, and profligacy, which too frequently mark the character of thoſe who were deſtitute of inſtruction

* 1 Tim. i. 11.

and education in their early years. By the benefit of our public charity-ſchools, and particularly of this, (as you may obſerve in the printed account,*) many boys have been trained up to honeſty, ſobriety, and uſefulneſs, who might otherwiſe have been nuiſances to ſociety; and ſome have not only obtained a good character as apprentices and ſervants, but, by their integrity and induſtry, have reputably riſen to affluence and influence. Could all the children of the poor be thus cared for, be taught the firſt principles of religion, and habituated to reſpect the Lord's Day, and to attend on public worſhip, it is probable that the number of depredators who infeſt our ſtreets and roads, or break into houſes, and end their unhappy lives on the gallows, would be much diminiſhed.

The awful times in which we live render theſe inſtitutions peculiarly worthy of attention and encouragement. I cannot ſpeak poſitively from my own knowledge, but I have reaſon to believe that the abettors of the French principles of infidelity and anarchy have ſeminaries where children, of all deſcriptions, find ready and welcome admiſſion. It is even ſaid that they are paid for their attendance. It is, however, certain, that a ſpirit of inſubordination, and a defiance of all laws, human or divine, have rapidly ſpread, and are ſtill rapidly ſpreading, among the lower claſſes of our people. The liberty and equality inculcated in theſe ſchools is not like that which, under our mild and equitable laws, gives every perſon an equal advantage for riſing in life, by the proper and diligent

* See the ſtatement at the end.

diligent improvement of his talents; but is adapted to confound all order and diſtinction, and to reduce us to the common level of a ſavage and barbarous ſtate. It is therefore the common intereſt of all, and eſpecially of perſons of property, to exert themſelves in their places to counteract this baneful deſign.

But I have a higher conſideration to propoſe to you, who know the worth of ſouls, and have felt the power of the conſtraining love of Chriſt.

When a child is born that is heir to a title or a great fortune, it uſually cauſes much joy to the family and much congratulation from their friends. The birth of poor children is leſs noticed; but the birth of any child, whether of a prince or a pauper, is an event of great, yea of equal, importance, if we form our judgement by the ſtandard of the unerring word of God: When a child is born, a new exiſtence begins which will never end. The preſent life of the children before you is precarious, but their ſouls are, by God's conſtitution and appointment, immortal. Perhaps you may ſee them no more upon earth, but you will ſurely meet them again, at the great day, when you, and I, and they, muſt all ſtand before the judgement-ſeat of Chriſt. Though education alone cannot convert them, it is in the number of thoſe means which God has enjoined us to uſe, and which he has promiſed to bleſs for that purpoſe. Happy are they who are inſtrumental in ſaving a ſoul from death! Happy and honoured will you be, if, from a ſenſe of his love, who, when he was rich, made himſelf

ſelf poor for your ſakes,* you, according to your abilities, imitate his example, in promoting the welfare of your fellow-creatures. You may do much in this way, by contributing to the inſtruction of poor children, and thereby ſhielding them from the ſnares and temptations to which ignorant and neglected youth are expoſed. You know not but, in the day of final award, ſome of theſe children may ſtand with you on the right hand of our Saviour and Judge, and you may hear him ſay, Inaſmuch as you did it to the leaſt of theſe, ye did it unto me!†

Thus much in behalf of the ſchool. But my heart is too much impreſſed by the ſight of this numerous and reſpectable auditory, and by my ſincere regard for the true happineſs of every individual before me, to permit me to conclude till I have addreſſed you on a ſubject of more general concern. I am not preaching to Jews or Mahomedans, but to profeſſed Chriſtians. I am willing to take it for granted, that we all agree in acknowledging that the Scripture, the whole Scripture, is a revelation of the will of God. I hope there is not a perſon here, however immerſed in the buſineſs, or drawn aſide by the amuſements and pleaſures, of the world, who, if he were deſired to throw the Bible, with deliberation and contempt, into the fire, would not be ſhocked at the propoſal. I think he would ſay, If I have not paid that attention to the Bible which it deſerves, yet ſurely I am not ſo wicked and preſumptuous as to burn it. But permit me to aſk

* 2 Cor. viii. 9. † Matt. xxv. 40.

aſk you in love, If it be indeed the word of God, why have you not paid that attention to it which it deſerves? The ſame reaſons, which would deter you from wilfully throwing it into the fire, ſhould induce you to ſtudy it carefully, to make it the foundation of your hope and the rule of your life; for, if it be indeed the word of God, it is the rule by which your characters will be decided, and your everlaſting ſtate fixed, according to the tenour of the Goſpel, which proclaims ſalvation to all who have repentance towards God and faith in our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and to thoſe only.

It is painful to a ſerious mind to obſerve how much the Bible is neglected. I have known ſome *great houſes* in which this book could not be found. In others, if it has a place in the library, it is ſeldom removed from the ſhelf. Perhaps there is no book ſo little read, underſtood, or regarded, as the book of God, by multitudes who are not unwilling to be called Chriſtians. What an affront is this to the Almighty! A meſſage from the king, or an act of parliament, engages the attention of thoſe who are intereſted in the ſubject-matter, while the reveaied will of God, our Creator, compared with whom all the kings, nations, and inhabitants of the earth, are but as a drop of water to the ſea, or the ſmall duſt upon a balance, is treated with indifference; though every perſon who can have acceſs to it is deeply and equally intereſted in its contents. Should there be but a few of my hearers who, through their engagements

and

and purſuits in life, have hitherto been remiſs and negligent in acquainting themſelves with the principal facts and truths recorded in the Bible, neither my conſcience nor my compaſſion will permit me to cloſe my diſcourſe till I have briefly expoſtulated with them; as it is poſſible I may never have another opportunity, and perhaps the providence of God has brought them hither this morning for their good.

Whatever difference of opinion there may be amongſt us in other reſpects, we are univerſally agreed as to the certainty of death and the uncertainty of life. We are ſure that all muſt die; and, after death, if the Scriptures be true, we muſt appear before God in judgement. Nor have we any warrant to aſſure ourſelves that we ſhall live to the end of the preſent year, or even week. Boaſt not thyſelf of to-morrow, for thou knoweſt not what a day may bring forth.* We often read or hear of ſudden deaths, and ſometimes of thoſe, who, after a lingering illneſs, die as ſuddenly, to their own apprehenſions of the event, as if they had died by a flaſh of lightning. It is no leſs a proof than a fruit of that depravity, which the Scripture charges upon the whole human race, that men, who are ſo active and ſolicitous in managing the temporal tranſient affairs of time, to promote what they conceive moſt to their advantage, ſhould be totally indifferent to what may be their allotment in a ſtate unchangeable and eternal!

Permit

* Prov. xxvii. 1.

Permit me briefly to remind you, that the Scripture concludes us all under ſin, and expoſed to the juſt diſpleaſure of our Great Creator, Proprietor, Law-giver, and Benefactor. He formed us for himſelf, and gave a thirſt and capacity for happineſs which only himſelf can ſatisfy. Our relation to Him, as intelligent creatures, who live, move, and have our being, in Him, and cannot ſubſiſt a moment without Him, binds us to love Him ſupremely, to devote all our powers and faculties to his ſervice. This is the law of our nature. This law we have broken; we all of us have lived too long, and ſome of us are ſtill living without God in the world. We have made our own will and our own gratification the rule and end of our conduct inſtead of his will and glory. We have incurred the penalty annexed to the breach of this law. We are ſinners, the wages of ſin is death, and the extent of that ſentence is everlaſting deſtruction from the preſence of the Lord and the glory of his power. How ſhall we eſcape? What ſhall we do to be ſaved?

To thoſe who are ſenſible of their deſert and danger, the Goſpel points out relief and a refuge. Jeſus invites the weary and burdened ſinner, and ſays, Him that cometh, I will in no wiſe caſt out. You have heard ſomething of his glorious perſon, power, authority, and love. He is able, he is willing, he has promiſed, to ſave to the uttermoſt all that come to God by Him. Oh, that to-day you may hear his voice and comply with his invitation. If you cordially

dially receive the record which God has, by his own voice from heaven, given, This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleaſed! He will, for his ſake, be well pleaſed with you, if you approve of this way of ſalvation, in which juſtice and mercy harmonize, which aſcribes all the glory to God, teaches us to hate ſin, and inſpires the love of holineſs, as eſſential to happineſs, then this Saviour, and all the fulneſs of his ſalvation, will aſſuredly be yours. You will then renounce every other hope, you will no longer truſt or boaſt in yourſelves, but you will have a good warrant to boaſt and glory in your Saviour, and to ſay, In the Lord I have righteouſneſs and ſtrength. The Lord is my ſhepherd, therefore I ſhall not want, I need not fear; he will ſupport me by his arm, cheer me with his preſence, protect me by his power, guide me by his counſels, and afterwards receive me to glory.

THE END.

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Number of Boys admitted in the LANGBOURN-WARD CHARITY-SCHOOL, *ſince its Foundation in* 1702.

Put out apprentices	391
To ſea-ſervice	16
Taken out, or otherwiſe diſpoſed of,	743
Now taught in the ſchool	50
Total,	1200

The TRUSTEES *and* COMMITTEE *return their thanks to the Subſcribers and Public at large for their ſupport of the School, and beg leave to inform them, that they have reduced the number of Boys, and are about to admit* GIRLS *in their ſtead.*

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